



Recent News & Community Highlights

PennFuture Delaware River Basin Staff Lead Advocacy for Riparian Buffer Protection: Importance for the Lake Erie Watershed



Read PennFuture's
Riparian Buffer Blog!

Did you know legislation proposed in the PA House aims to protect vital riparian buffers?

PennFuture staff in the Delaware River Basin are leading the effort to support passage of the PA Riparian Buffer Protection Act ([House Bill 1275](#)).

Riparian buffers are the areas of undeveloped land surrounding bodies of water that contain trees, shrubs, and other plants.

Riparian buffers serve many roles. They provide habitat for wildlife and maintain cool water temperatures to support aquatic life, like trout. They act as sponges, soaking up stormwater runoff, which reduces the occurrence and impact of flooding. They also act as filters by purifying that stormwater, removing contaminants like road salt and vehicle fluids that can get carried into waterways during heavy rainfall events.

Protecting existing riparian buffers is critically important in Pennsylvania where agricultural and urban stormwater runoff are two of the three leading causes of water pollution. More than 30% of Pennsylvania's 86,000 stream miles are so polluted that the DEP considers them "impaired" - meaning that they are too polluted to meet the standards set for them.

In the Lake Erie Watershed, we face continued suburban sprawl, harmful algal blooms linked to high nutrient runoff, and waterway impairment frequently due to sedimentation. Protecting our riparian buffers is one essential tool for reducing the impacts of these clean water threats.

If you would like to learn more about PennFuture's efforts to protect riparian buffers, read our recent [blog post](#) and [policy brief](#). PennFuture will continue to provide updates regarding our support for riparian buffer protection, including progress toward passage for HB 1275.

PennFuture, Partners Respond to Commonwealth Court RGGI Decision, Call to Governor Shapiro to Appeal

Governor Josh Shapiro has less than 30 days to appeal the [Commonwealth Court decision](#) that keeps Pennsylvania from participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

PennFuture and our partners released [this statement in response to the Commonwealth Court ruling](#), urging the Governor to appeal. The Governor has 30 days from the ruling to appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

PennFuture's Legal Intern Lindsay Williamson wrote this article [How RGGI Can Help PA Meet EPA's New Carbon Emission Reduction Standards](#) which explains how PA could utilize RGGI to create accountability and force power plants to reduce their GHG emissions.

Electricity generation is the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania ranks third among states for highest emissions.

It is essential that we take responsibility for our fossil fuel emissions in Pennsylvania, where we are seeing the impacts of climate change. Here is a short list of water quality challenges in the Lake Erie Watershed exacerbated by climate change:

- Increasingly heavy precipitation events linked to climate change increase the rate and volume of agricultural and stormwater runoff. Nutrient runoff leads to the harmful algal blooms and bacterial contamination plaguing Erie's beaches.
- Increasing severe weather can cause flooding that threatens water quality and human health. Oftentimes, our aging infrastructure is not equipped for this increasingly severe weather, raising response costs.
- Warmer waters in Lake Erie are more difficult for native species to adapt to, creating conditions for invasive species to thrive.
- Warmer stream temperatures lower oxygen availability threatening some our most beloved species, including steelhead.

Pennsylvania's inclusion in RGGI is a clean water issue!



Send a letter to Governor
Shapiro asking him to
appeal the Commonwealth
Court RGGI ruling!



Other Stories

- [People Rally Against County Council's Decision with Project NepTWNE](#), Erie News Now
- [Banta plans to form authority, take over North East Marina from Fish & Boat Commission](#), Erie-Times News
- [DEP 2024 Water Quality Report Shows 28,820 Miles of Streams with Impaired Water Quality in PA \(34%\) - An Increase from 27,886 in 2022](#), PA Environment Digest
- [Pennsylvania program helps residents, businesses convert lawns to meadows](#), WHYY
- [Great Lakes tribes' knowledge of nature could be key to navigating climate change. Will enough people listen?](#), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
- [EPA Restarts Assessment of Health Risks from Nitrate in Water](#), Circle of Blue
- [National Climate Assessment Charts Climate Change's Growing Impact in the US, While Stressing Benefits of Action](#), The Allegheny Front
- [House Democrats Introduce the Clean Water Act of 2023](#), Congressman Don Beyer
- [Five Decades and a Mountain of Evidence: Study Explores How Toxic Chemicals are 'Stealing Children's Future Potential'](#), Inside Climate News

Upcoming Events & Public Meetings

- **Monday, November 20th:** [Greenhouse Grand Opening](#), 2:30-4:30 pm, Mercyhurst University Zurn Hall (parking in the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center Lot)
- **Wednesday, November 29th:** [First City of Erie Environmental Advisory Council Meeting](#), 3-5 pm, City Council Chambers
- **Saturday, December 2nd:** [Presque Isle Gallery & Gifts Holiday Open House](#), 5-9 pm, Tom Ridge Environmental Center Foundation
- **Tuesday, December 5th:** [Lecture: The Plastics Paradox by Sherri A. Mason, PhD](#), 6-7 pm, Asbury Woods Year of Water Event (Nature Center)
- **Thursday, December 7th:** [Buffalo Creek Confluence: Coming Together for Shared Solutions](#), 9-4 pm, Audubon Society of Western PA, Hybrid with in-person programming at Buffalo Creek Nature Park (154 Monroe Rd, Sarver, PA), \$20 in person fee & free online

Partner Spotlight



The Year of Water

Asbury Woods

[Asbury Woods](#) strives to realize a future for Northwestern Pennsylvania where appreciation for and protection of natural spaces

Learn more about
The Year of Water
at Asbury Woods!

is a deeply held personal and community value. Asbury Woods is a great community partner providing a plethora of educational programs and recreational opportunities.

This year is The Year of Water at Asbury Woods, which marks the start of a new initiative to take a deeper dive into environmental topics. PennFuture is thankful for the opportunity to support several Year of Water events.

[Register](#) for the next Year of Water event scheduled for Tuesday, December 5th - a lecture by Dr. Sherri A. Mason, one of the foremost experts in the field of freshwater plastics pollution!

Giving Tuesday

The holidays are for giving. We give because it makes us feel good. Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, the winter solstice, or something else, we are all celebrating our community and sharing gratitude with our loved ones at the end of the year.

And what better way to kick off these celebrations than participation in GivingTuesday on **November 28th!** This global day of giving has become the biggest giving day of the year.

Please consider [donating to PennFuture](#) for this GivingTuesday.

PennFuture's work goes on all year long because environmental watchdogs never sleep! Your generous GivingTuesday donation contributes to our ability to be Pennsylvania's watchdog for clean air, pure water, and a healthy climate every day.

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